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BAI HUA'S SCRIPT 'UNREQUITED LOVE'

Hong Kong CHENG MING [CONTENDING] in Chinese No 44, 1 Jun 81 pp 82-98

[Script of "Ku Lian" [Unrequited Love], a motion picture, by Bai Hua  
[4101 2901]]

[Text] Editor's Note: Bai Hua's script of a film drama was originally published in the major literary magazine "Shiyue," No 3, 1979. The criticism of Bai Hua and "Unrequited Love" evoked strong reactions of different kinds from abroad. A wide circle of readers is eager to read the original "Unrequited Love" in order to judge the rights and wrongs of the case. We herewith reprint the full text of the script.

"The road is tedious and extremely long  
And I shall search all regions, high and low." Qu Yuan

An endless blue sky; white clouds as if dotted on haphazardly by a painter's brush...

In one corner of the picture a reed, upright but blown about violently by a gusty wind. The reed keeps moving back and forth but staunchly perseveres, outlined against the vast and bare blue sky...

The only sound is the wind...

From afar comes the honking of wild geese, slowly coming nearer and nearer.

In the lower corner of the screen, a wild goose appears and laboriously, wearily, yet with dignity, navigates the transparent sea of blue.... With the appearance of the wild goose, electronic organ music starts up a moving, quivering tune. The camera follows the wild goose as it flutters on. The electronic organ continues to play a sentimental tune, giving a sensation of proud dignity, but also the mildly bitter taste of a stalk of weed or the last drop in a cup of coffee. The accompanying music in parts is of a splendor and depth as if the whole world is singing in rapture and madness.

In the air, one wild goose appears, then three, then five...they fly in the formation of the Chinese character "ren" (man), thus writing the greatest national word into the sky, a word that covers heaven and earth.

A dignified voice lightly intunes:

Ah...

Joyful singing of the course of events,  
In our flight we write the character "ren" on the sky;  
Oh, how beautiful,  
It is the loftiest symbol between heaven and earth.

Ah...

Joyful song, those eternal hopes and aspirations,  
We are loudly proclaiming "man" as we write the "ren" character on the sky,  
Oh, how brilliant!  
It will shine more brightly as all the stars of the Milky Way.

Ah...

Joyful song, deep and dark suffering,  
We fly on ahead we write the "ren" character on the sky,  
Oh, how radiant,  
This is the most powerful symbol in the world.

Now bring out the name of the picture:

Unrequited Love

From high up in the air, we look down through thin clouds on the boundless land; with the warm affection that only a mother can feel we look at the great land, our mothercountry...

The rolling sea of clouds, the undulating hills and mountains, the many strings of silvery rivers and waterways...

List of actors and staff...

The lens pushes on, away from the sky toward the earth, moving on until a small black spot appears among the hills...

A cordial voice from offscreen speaks:

"Let me introduce a man, a painter, a friend of mine; I believe he will also become your friend!"

The small black spot gradually grows larger, it turns out to be indeed a painter who in unrequited love madly loves his fatherland and its people, now painting in front of a large painting.

An offscreen voice:

"No matter what big personage or great philosopher before the picture of the great expanse of our fatherland, they will feel modest, humble and very, very small. Before his mother, he only wears undershirt and shorts; he paints the motherly breasts that gave us spiritual and physical nourishment.

He zealously paints along, drunkenly elated and frantically...

The painter's eyes; the great land that is our fatherland.  
The painter's eyes; the great land that is our fatherland.

List of actors and staff...

The marvelous natural scenery is constantly changing: the flowers of spring, the autumn moon, willows that wane and decay, paulownia trees that wither and dry up....The thousands of mountains that vie with each other in their delicate beauty.

List of actors and staff...

A paint brush appears on the painting. Unconsciously, the camera has shifted from the land to one large painting on which he is painting...

The painter sits in front of us with the fatherland as background. He knocks out his pipe, starts smoking again, the smoke wafting lightly past his face.

An offscreen voice:

"From where to start my story? The world is so large, the road so long and there was so much deep love..."

The lense zooms in on the eyes of the painter, closer and closer, until one pair of reserved and stern eyes fills the whole screen...

As the lense quickly draws back again, the scenery has already changed.

It is 1976, summer night has almost come at a reed marsh in the south.

In the faint glimmer of the reflected light, a small boat slowly moves along. The old fisherman in the boat sticks bamboo poles into the lake at certain distances; between the poles there is a line of fishhooks.

The night is calm and peaceful, the only noise is from the water.

The boat moves away...

A fish is on one of the hooks and its wiggling makes a noise.

A sudden movement in the clusters of reed and an escapee with dishevelled hair and dirty face, in tattered clothes, jumps out like a flash. After quickly looking around cautiously, he hastily swims over and with shaking hands removes the fish that writhes and wiggles its tail. The man quickly swims back into the cluster of reeds; he hurriedly scratches the scales from the fish with his fingernails and greedily starts to eat the raw fish in big bites while we still see the wiggling tail of the fish...

Suddenly, the honking of a wild goose frightens the man. The escapee shakes all over and abruptly stares up into the sky. The lense quickly zooms in on him;



his face is really like that of primitive man with his long beard and graying hair, but from his eyes we recognize that this is indeed the painter who was shown at the beginning of the film, his name is Ling Chenguang.

As dawn appears on the horizon, a flock of wild geese fly in, in the formation of the Chinese character "ren" and fly off into the distance...

Full of emotions the painter gazes at the geese in the air...

The geese fly along in the air in their "ren" formation...

With hot tears glistening in his eyes, he suddenly recalls from the depth of his memory the "chenhe" folk-opera tunes of his native place...mingled with the sounds of aeolian bells and the plaintive whine of the reed pipes.

An offscreen voice:

"In his times of agony and loneliness, a man will always think of his native place, dreaming to relive the happy and warm days of his childhood. Being a painter, he will always think of it in abundant light, colors and contours."

Twelve-year old Ling Chenguang stands in the middle of a bustling, noisy market somewhere in the mountainous regions of the south; he jokingly winks at us...

The lens focuses in on a group of natives of the Miao tribe dancing their "nuo" ritual dance, with the music of the reed pipes and the pretty skirts...

The music gradually fades away, the scene changes from the dazzling colors of bright sunshine to a mountain town wrapped in nocturnal darkness with sparse lights twinkling...

From offscreen comes the clear and melodious sound of the night watchman's clapper.

With the music from an old wheezing organ, we are led into a large room, dimly lit, with worn-out old furniture...

Mother is occupied correcting art work by primary school pupils, some of the pieces of their work are square houses, odd-shaped tangerines, little figures with 20 fingers outstretched...

Grandmother bangs her walking stick on the floor, sighs and grumbles:

"With no rice to eat, still having to bear this squeaking and creaking..."

Father, thin and emaciated, content with his world, treads the decrepit organ; he seems quite wrapped up in his music, swaying with his head and shoulders, thus giving vent to all his pent-up feelings of misery and depression playing some somewhat out-of-tune strains...At times he has to stop for a long spasm of coughing, almost choking with it.

The youthful Chenguang squats on the steps of the house and looks at the aeolian bells at the eaves of the neighboring Confucius temple. The bells swing and emit a tinkling that makes one lose one's thought in reverie. All the eaves at their different angles have bells attached to them, swinging in the wind, they tinkle, there they are contrasted against the starlit sky, tinkling sometimes faster sometimes slower depending on the wind...

On a bright and beautiful morning we see Chenguang run along a path in the woods, carrying his schoolbag.

At a tiny temple housing the village god, Chenguang creeps in, his behind high up in the air. At the feet of the joyful village god and his wife, there was already a row of schoolbags. Chenguang adds his own, gives the village god and his wife an apologetic smile, turns and runs off.

A swarm of pupils, having thus rid themselves of their schoolbags, cut their classes and rush like a herd of free-running lambs to the fairground.

However, Chenguang alone runs to another place.

There is a narrow street, about half a kilometer long; the poor people on both sides of the street make a living molding Buddhist idols from clay.

An offscreen voice: "He cut his regular school classes, but here Chenguang becomes a diligent student of another kind..."

With a serious and respectful attitude, he approaches the masters of clay sculpturing as they create these beautiful artistic images, but the people are all poverty-stricken looking very much down-and-out in their tattered clothes...

There are arhats with witty, humorous expressions...like the drunkards and crazy, scabious monks at certain street corners, ferocious judges with unmistakably bureaucratic airs, fairy maidens, lovely as the young village lasses, the demon-fighting, red-bearded Zhong Kui and the merciful goddess Guanyin standing on a white lotus.

The tunes of "chenhe" folk-opera drift in from off screen.

Suddenly, a respondent but fear-inspiring demon king appears before us, a paper image to be burnt at a funeral...with red hair, green beard, a greenish face and ferocious fangs, the belt around his robe rustling in the wind...

Sedan chairs, pagodas, many-storied houses, traveler's baggage, noble steeds and tall carriages, coachmen slavishly in attendance, all made of paper to be burnt at funerals.

Chenguang is stupified; he holds his breath; the sight of all the bright colors and the vividness of expressions overwhelm him...The awe-inspiring demon king, contrasted against the blue sky and the white clouds seems to be flying off, riding on wind.

Chenguang loves the place and is reluctant to part. The "chenhe" folk-opera music gradually fades away...

An amazing butterfly, large and beautiful...it was meant to be a kite. He hurries over, so many kites, a moon-fairy flutters as if wafting away, a wiggling centipede, twin swallows, the Eight Immortals led by Lu Dongbin...

The man doing the drawing and coloring is a silent, middle-aged man. His magic brush turns the pattern of a butterfly into a riot of colors.

Little Chenguang asks him something but the man can only use his nimble fingers that held the brush to express himself in the sign language of the mute; his throat can only utter a sound like "ah-ah." Little Chenguang imitates his ways, which makes the man laugh.

An offscreen voice:

"A mute maker of kites taught him the coordination of colors, proper proportions, curves and modeling...Only in the native folk art did he truly learn his basic lessons...."

He timidly uses a brush in experimenting coloring a kite and the mute, speaking silently with his fingers, gives him encouragement.

In the air, kites dancing in the wind, hundreds of them of all shades and colors...

He looks up into the blinding sunshine, following the flight of the kites...

Little Chenguang, carrying his schoolbag, stands at the door; in the middle of the room on a wooden door plank lies father's emaciated dead body. Mother is bent over father's body and weeps noiselessly; grandmother stamps her walking stick on the brick floor and wails...

Little Chenguang, completely dumbstruck, is at a loss what to do.

Eyes--youthful Chenguang's tear-filled eyes. The lens widens; we see mother washing little Chenguang's feet. Grandmother walks constantly up and down the room stamping her walking stick on the brick floor. Little Chenguang says, choking with sobs: "Mama, I will never leave home, never leave you, never leave grandma."

Mother trembles as she says: "My son, mother also hates to let you go, but you will have to go, otherwise we will all...starve to death..."

"I will not leave home, never leave you and grandma..."

Little Chenguang, with a bundle on his back, walks along the street of the arhats; the poor sculptors drop whatever they are doing to gaze after him in farewell...

The lifelike, fierce demon king flutters noisily in the air...



The mute man also gazes after little Chenguang in farewell; suddenly he takes a beautiful butterfly kite and follows Chenguang...

The butterfly kite flies up, higher and higher...

Little Chenguang walks on the road, he looks back at the kite, at his little native town, at the green woods and clear water in the little river...

The tinkling of the aeolian bells drifts over extremely clearly and distinctly...

The kite sways in the breeze as if waving farewell to Chenguang...

Little Chenguang's eyes become dimmed with tears...He suddenly turns and kneels in the direction of his native place and touches the ground in a farewell obeisance...

With this, the "chenhe" folk-opera music starts up...

Little Chenguang resolutely turns round and does not look back anymore, no matter how the aeolian bells tinkle...

Little Chenguang marches along a mountain road. On both sides, there are branches laden with the yellow flowers of winter jasmine, the branches are higher than little Chenguang and intersect at his sides.

Chenguang stands in a reed marsh, it is morning, an ocean of water lilies stretches as far as one can see. There is an ever-changing hue of colors. The beauty of the rosy dawn is amazing, its redness spreads over the sky and the lake. The waves glisten, wonderfully stirred by the morning breeze. He stands, slightly open-mouthed, gazing admiringly at this sparkling, beautiful nature.

Suddenly, a water fowl slaps its wings and flies up from the water. It startles Chenguang who hastily ducks back into the reeds and creeps under.

A flock of egrets swims out from among the water lilies, leisurely and care-free, heading toward the open water...

Chenguang crawls into the thick clusters of reeds...

A school of fish swims toward the surface and with their little round mouths gulping in the air and the light of dawn...

In the world of men, curls of smoke rise from the chimneys of the peasant huts...

A small sail appears on the horizon where water and sky meet...  
A new day has started, life stirs again in all things...

However, Chenguang quickly creeps deeper into the clusters of reeds...He frequently listens and spies in all directions...

The sun rises to its highest point...

Chengguang, staring into the sky, lies deep among the reed bushes, his arms crooked for head support. From afar there is the honking of a wild goose, he straightens up and glimpses out over the tops of the reeds.

A flock of geese fly by overhead in the formation of the character "ren"...

A highway in the mountains where a flow of refugees takes up the whole breadth of the road...

The young Chengguang, with a bundle on his back, walks in the opposite direction, against the flow of the refugees...

An offscreen voice:

"To seek one's relatives in the turmoil and chaos of war is as hopeless as seeking a lifesaving boat in the storm-tossed ocean..."

There is the thunder of guns drifting in.

The panic-stricken refugees rush on madly, shouting: "The Japanese are coming!"

A group of female college students are utterly exhausted and cannot go on, some fall down in twisted shapes, some support each other...

An almost new Dodge truck stops at the roadside. The fat-headed, big-eared driver bangs at the flaps of the truck with his hands in protective gloves and calls out: "Anyone wants to marry me, step up onto my truck!"

The sound of the gunfire comes closer and closer...

One of the girl students walks toward the truck, then another, then another... like a swarm of bees they crowd onto the truck, pulling each other up...

The truck driver squeezes into his cabin and swears: "To hell! How can the old man feed so many of them?"

The truck starts up and goes off at full speed. Some 10 or so students fall off the back of the truck.

Young Chengguang stares fixedly, with grief and fright at the dust rising from the highway.

The sky over the marsh is sprinkled with stars...

The escapee, Ling Chengguang, is awakened, he inclines his head and listens. There is the sound of approaching footsteps in the shallow water and of something brushing against the reeds. He raises himself and bends in a defensive posture.

A small elderly man comes into view. He wears a fisherman's short jacket and long pants, well-weathered but in perfect condition, somewhat like a figure from the stage of the Peking opera. Chenguang thought it best to get the start on him, he rushes the little old man and brings him down. Chenguang was just thinking of taking this opportunity to escape, when he is unexpectedly pulled back by his leg by the little old man, who with one further pull brings down Chenguang. The two struggle with only the sound of their heavy breathing, until finally the small old man had Chenguang completely under control and is sitting astride Chenguang's back and with both his hands holds down Chenguang's neck. Chenguang is struggling.

The little old man brings his face closer to Chenguang, looks carefully and quickly loosens his grip:

"Ah, you, are you not the famous painter Ling Chenguang?"

"You?" Chenguang sits up and looks carefully at the little old man. The little old man speaks up, very proud of himself:

"You don't seem to know me!" The little old man gets up and somewhat boastfully introduces himself: "Former research fellow of the Institute of History, professor of the first rank, Feng Hansheng!"

"Ah!" Chenguang surveys this former research fellow and famous professor with amazement. He had now turned completely into a poor fisherman, but he was full of energy and sharp-sighted. With an enquiring tone, Chenguang says: "And you?..."

"You want to say, how I got myself into such big trouble, isn't it?" Feng Hansheng sighed: "Oh, because of love..."

"Love?" Chenguang asks, completely surprised, "...who?"

"Absolutely beautiful, absolutely beautiful," Feng Hansheng is truly excited.

"You must be over 70?"

"Seventy-four," Feng Hansheng recollects with pleasure. "Young man, you misunderstand," and he opens his jacket and claps his waist. "What I love is here!"

Only then did Chenguang notice the flat belt that Feng wore and to which he had pointed.

"Money?"

"Money?!" Feng unties his belt and with a pencil-shaped flashlight shines on a bundle of bound papers: "Look at this!"

Small, closely-written characters, neatly in "xiao-kai" [small standard type] style.

"Your manuscript?"

"You are right," Feng says, retying his belt, "history, a section of true history! So that it might not be violated by anyone, I got myself into this miserable situation...And you?"

"...I, of course it was due to my painting..."

"This book of mine may not come out for the next 100 years, may possibly have to wait several hundred years till it meets its readers. By then, archeologists may unearth my bones and will discover the manuscript. I only hope they will then read it through and say: 'Ah! That there was such a sincere and honest man in 1976! What a wonderful relic.' That would be all right! I will then close my mouth in the netherworld and lie quietly for all millenia to come."

The two remain quiet; from afar the strange sound of a water fowl increases the dreariness of the scene.

Feng Hansheng waves his hand and asks: "All right then! Have you anything to eat?"

Chenguang hands Feng Hansheng the uneaten half of the raw fish which he took off a stalk of reed. As Feng saw what it was under the light of his pencil-shaped flashlight, he bursts out laughing: "Civilized men of the seventies in the 20th century eating a meal of before 2,000 B.C.," and he throws the half-eaten fish far away. "Have you any tobacco?"

Chenguang gropes and brings out a pipe saying: "I have not had pipe tobacco for a long time!"

Feng Hansheng pulls out a tobacco pouch and a lighter and thrusts them into Chenguang's hands. "Smoke this, I will get some food fit for civilized people." Saying this, he turns and disappears into the reeds.

Chenguang fills his pipe, lights it, sits down next to some bushes of reed and starts to smoke...

The little glow, as it lights up and dies, makes him reminisce...

Open country, a green carpet of rice seedling beds.

A row of egrets flying up from the field...

The fields filled with the water that had been pumped into them reflects like glass the bright and beautiful skies overhead...

Young Chenguang carries a wooden board on his head; on the board is a row of unburnt clay jars. He walks along a narrow path between the fields...

An offscreen voice:

"Having a job means having one's ricebowl filled, but when it comes to walking along the roads, one is not as free and unburdened as with a small bundle on one's back!"

The raw body of a clay jar is turning; this is a small pottery factory and young Chenguang very skillfully molds the unburnt clay forms...



The raw clay body turns and Chenguang skillfully molds the raw clay form...

"That is very nice!" the clear and melodious voice of a young girl says behind Chenguang. Young Chenguang turns and looks at a pretty girl in clean white dress standing close behind him. She wears a white blouse with cuffs tightly closed, a short skirt, white stockings, white tennis shoes; she has a round face, jet-black eyes and boyishly bobbed hair.

The girl looks on curiously.

The raw clay body is turning. As he is accustomed to do, Chenguang splashes more water and clay onto the body, some clay splatters on the girl's skirt. Chenguang hastens to clean it off with his hands, but only makes it worse.

The girl is not angry, on the contrary, she laughs and says: "It doesn't matter, it will wash off."

Chenguang's face is flushed and he buries himself in his work with the clay...

The raw clay body turns. Chenguang turns to steal a glance at the girl. She still stands there smiling, in her dazzling white blouse and skirt...

An abundance of magnolia flowers against a sunny sky.

Young Chenguang raises his eyes and in pleasant surprise looks at the bright blossoms. This is a small side-temple for meditation in a larger Buddhist temple, extremely quiet and peaceful, the shadow of magnolia blossoms is all over its brick floor, which is overgrown with moss.

Young Chenguang takes off his shoes and hand over fist climbs up the magnolia tree, selects a good branch, breaks it off and slides down the tree like a monkey...

A magnolia flower in a broken bottle. The lens widens and only then do we see that it is a half-collapsed storage cellar, somewhat like part of an ancient castle. Young Chenguang has set up here his own painter's studio, his paintings and woodcuts are fastened to the walls. He is just now holding a wood-block and working away on it with an ordinary handwork knife with great energy. The shadow of another person falls on his body. He looks up and sees that it is again the young girl. Young Chenguang does not pay any attention. The girl curiously eyes his pictures and this strange castle:

"Really pretty!" she says, grasping his hand around which he had wound strips of old cloth. "You work with this kind of knife?...with a real woodcarving knife you could make even prettier things!"

Young Chenguang draws his hand back. The young girl says: "Mister, would you like to visit our house?"

Young Chenguang is at a loss what to think; he looks at her.

"We have books at home...lots of books..."

Young Chenguang begins to be interested.

"Also books about painting..."

Young Chenguang's eyes light up.

"My father is a good man..."

The voice of the girl becomes an offscreen voice: "An extremely good father."

The scene has become the home of the Chen family, high French windows with a view on to a plum tree with dazzling red flowers. Mr Chen stands, happily smiling, before Chenguang.

Off screen, the voice of the young girl: "I also have a good mother, she is a pianist..."

Mrs Chen smiles as she plays Chopin's Nocturne...

The young girl stands in front of Chenguang, stretches out her hand: "My name is Juanjuan..."

Young Chenguang stretches out his own dark hand: "Ling Chenguang..." and he pulls from his pocket a few sheets of wrinkled, rough sketches of paintings which he gives to Juanjuan, who accepts the paintings with great joy...

Juanjuan asks young Chenguang to sit on a small sofa near the window and hands him a large pile of albums of paintings...

Young Chenguang is greatly fascinated as he goes through the albums...

Juanjuan is fascinated as she leafs through the sketches she got from Chenguang.

Mr Chen brings young Chenguang a cup of tea and starts chatting with him as with a grown-up person:

"Look them over, have a look at all our books...My friend! I spent much of my life abroad; I am a scientist. In the war of resistance, I thought I should return to my fatherland and be of some use. But what a pity, nobody took any notice of me..." Mr Chen slowly gives vent to his feelings of depression, stroking his hair that was bleached by the grief he had suffered...

Young Chenguang is much moved and holds onto his books naively.

Again the small side-temple yard with its huge magnolia tree. Magnolia flowers all over the tree, all over the yard, all over the scene. Chenguang is on the tree plucking magnolia flowers. Through the magnolia flowers he looks down into the face of an old monk who looks up at him, but seemingly without any bad intentions. The senior monk smiles and waves to him. Chenguang slides down from the tree. A small novice questions him:

"Why do you pick the flowers?"

"Because I want to!"

"What for?"

"I can paint!"

"Can you paint?"

"Of course I can paint!"

"What can you paint?"

"I can paint anything!"

"Let me see," the senior monk gently asks, "will you?"

Young Chenguang pulls a large paper bundle from his chest pocket.

"Ah!" The senior monk leads him into a room of the temple, the smell of sandalwood lingers in the air, on a desk there are the "four treasures of the studio," several volumes of religious books, a bundle of painting brushes, on the table a paper is spread out inscribed with characters. The senior monk unrolls the bundle of papers that young Chenguang had given him and the monk's face gradually lights up. Pointing to the contour sketches of magnolias, he asks young Chenguang:

"Will you give these to me?"

Young Chenguang nods.

"Do you have a seal to stamp on?"

"I have," says young Chenguang and stretches out his index finger.

The senior monk opens the ink pad, young Chenguang puts his black finger on the ink pad and then uses the finger as his "seal."

Young Chenguang sees a scroll on the table inscribed with characters and asks: "You also seem to be very clever at this?"

The senior monk nods.

"Will you write me a scroll?"

The senior monk again nods: "Come back and get it in a few days!"

Young Chenguang looks around in the quiet and peaceful temple room; he suddenly sees a Buddhist statue in a shrine and asks the monk: "Why is this Buddhist statue so black?"

The senior monk answers very seriously: "The incense from devout men and women has blackened him..."

"Ah?"

"Is that strange? My child, in the mortal world the consequences of affairs frequently turn out contrary to the best of intentions..."

Young Chenguang, half understanding what he had heard, wipes his inked finger on his clothes, takes the magnolia branch and goes his way.

The senior monk smiles.

At her home, Juanjuan digs out a porcelain little savings bank and takes it along.

A handkerchief is untied on the glasstop of a counter and Juanjuan points out to the shopkeeper of the small stationery shop a box with a carving knife. The shopkeeper counts the small change and shakes his head. He takes out a carving knife. Juanjuan knits her brow. The shopkeeper wants to retrieve the knife but Juanjuan grabs it quickly and runs off.

Juanjuan sits alone under the green window. She ties a tassel to the handle of the carving knife, the tassel has a "lover's knot."

Mrs Chen looks at her from a distance and calls: "Juanjuan, what are you doing?"

Juanjuan hides her hands behind her back.

"Mama, don't ask..."

Mother smiles.

Again the small side-temple yard filled with magnolia flowers.

An offscreen voice:

"Only a few days have passed and there is still a profusion of magnolia flowers. The temple hall is still so quiet and peaceful..."

When young Chenguang is about to set foot in the yard, he is surprised to see all the monks sitting there with crossed legs in meditation. Through an open space he walks through them into the temple hall where a sandalwood censer gives forth clouds of incense.

The elder, inclined to one side on a couch, supports his head with one hand as if tired; he has dozed off. The space in front of the couch is filled with the monks sitting cross-legged in meditation. Chenguang is excited to see that the magnolia outline paintings of his had been properly mounted and were hanging over the couch. There was another calligraphic scroll on the wall inscribed with a verse from Qu Yuan's "Li sao" [Falling Into Sorrow]: "Yet what I sincerely think is good, though I shall die nine deaths, I will never regret." The scroll was also solemnly inscribed: "At the request of lay Buddhist Ling Chenguang," and the signature said: "Master Hong-yi."

The scroll is moving in the light breeze...

Young Chenguang decides not to take the scroll; instead he respectfully retreats slowly through the row of monks. Only when he reaches the yard, he thinks he should kneel down and pay his respect. He kneels down and this is the second time in his life that he kowtows.

Young Chenguang is lost in thought, looking at the magnolia in his broken bottle...

In his imagination there appears the picture scroll of the magnolia in outline; the serene features of the senior monk who had passed away into the Buddhist heaven...

One morning, young Chenguang, with his bundle on his back, marches along a mountain path. The evergreen trees of the south seem lined up to bid him farewell...

"Wait--wait," called out by Juanjuan. Juanjuan dashes up to young Chenguang, for a while out of breath: "Mister, can't you stay?"



"I would very much like to stay...but I can't!" Young Chenguang smiles while he tries to hide his torn shoes, from which his toes stick out, in the grass.

Juanjuan pulls out the carving knife and says: "I hope you will not disdain this small present?"

Young Chenguang accepts the carving knife and very frankly says: "I...have no gift for you..."

"You gave me something already..."

"Is that so?" Chenguang looks at her with a puzzled look.

"You forgot...those beautiful pictures..."

Young Chenguang smiles with embarrassment, turns and walks away. Suddenly, he is followed by Juanjuan's song drifting after him. He stops, turns around, he finds the song beautiful to listen to.

Juanjuan sings with true emotions. With the first inkling of the ways of the world, her eyes fill with tears as she sings:

We met under the light of the sun,  
We became friends under the light of the moon;  
We are in love with each other,  
We love each other under the light of the stars.

How generous is the sunlight,  
Spreading flowers on the path of our first meeting.  
How gentle and soft is the moonlight,  
Lighting up the tears in our eyes.  
How cordially warm is the starlight,  
Having us unburdened of our most private feelings.

We met under the light of the sun,  
We became friends under the light of the moon;  
We are in love with each other,  
We love each other under the light of the stars.

Young Chenguang walks a circle before he finally leaves, humming the tune that Juanjuan was singing, a tune easily to be followed.

In the reed marsh. Smoke curling up from the pipe. Chenguang is humming the song of his youthful years...

"What is it?" Feng Hansheng reappears in front of him, shining his flashlight into Chenguang's face, as Chenguang is still deeply absorbed in memories. "Drunk with sweet memories, I understand! Memories are of the past. The past, the past is history...that is my field of study, but let us first solve a problem that every emperor and king also had to solve...the people's livelihood! Come!" So saying, he pulls several paper-wrapped parcels from his rucksack.

"You, did you steal...", Chenguang rashly let this word "steal" slip through his lips.

"Steal?" Feng Hansheng indeed shows some anger. "How could one steal, whatever we are, legalists or Confucianists, we are of a strait cultured people. Noble thoughts and sentiments, noble thoughts and sentiments, that is of utmost importance. I would rather die than steal. These things are all borrowed. There is a difference of principle between stealing and borrowing!" So saying, he fishes out a little notebook, "Professor's Handbook." "Look here, every item is clearly recorded: 1 pc. fried chicken, 2 catties and 8 liang, from the shelf of the Hubin district food store; tomatoes, 4-1/2 catties from the No 2 sales team of Guangming Street vegetable market; 20 wheat cakes from the Hongwei cooperative dining hall. I intend to return all this... Here is also some wine... Feel at ease... Enjoy it... Eat...Drink!" With these words, he pulls off a chicken leg and hands it to Chenguang. "...Of course, borrowing too requires great skill, otherwise people will not trust me, thinking that I am a poor professor who cannot repay, and on the contrary may make highly unpleasant trouble. First, I was also not able to do it, but later these two hands got very skillful..." Feng Hansheng raises the little wine bottle, drinks a mouthful and hands it to Chenguang.

In the light of dawn, the marsh is mysterious and fascinating. The frogs have gradually quietened down, from afar there is the crowing of a cock...

The paper packages are all empty and things are scattered about in a mess. Chenguang and Feng Hansheng lie on their backs, arms supporting their heads, apparently somewhat inebriated.

"My boy!" Feng Hansheng indistinctly mutters, "again thinking of your wife?"

"..." Chenguang does not answer, sits up and asks: "Your old woman...?"

"What?" Feng Hansheng got up with a jump, "How would I dare have a wife? I got into this sorry state because of this here--he slaps the manuscript at his waist--and then also to have a wife, that would really be splendid!"

Chenguang lies back again and sighs: "I have a wife; we are a couple in adversity..."

"Tell me about it, there have been no romantic events in my life, but I like to hear others tell of it..."

After some honking of wild geese, a flock of them appear in the formation of the character "ren."

A pair of naked feet walking along a road from which dust arises. When the lens is widened we see that it is Chenguang, a grown-up man now, with a bundle on his back.

Before him moves a contingent of wan and sallow looking men. Each man has an iron ring around his left wrist and they are all tied together with a long rope.

They move with difficulties, escorted by soldiers with loaded guns. A tall, thin captain follows behind. He occasionally looks back at the tramp and he is pondering an idea...

Suddenly, two big soldiers grab Chenguang. They put an iron ring on Chenguang's wrist. Three men grab him and string him to the rope, so he becomes one of the contingent of men. He tries to tear the rope with his teeth but the soldiers hit him with their rifle butts.

The conscripts sit on the grass at the side of the road, forming a circle. Each has a razor and they begin to shave each other's heads. Chenguang also sits in the circle. He shaves the head of the man in front but would not let the man behind him shave his head. He knocks the knife out of the hand of the man behind him.

In a flash the scene changes. The conscripts still form a circle, but instead of shaving knives they hold bamboo strips in their hands, with which they hit each other. The noise is echoed by the wooded hills. Chenguang does not hit anybody, nor does he let anybody hit him.

The captain speaks secretly to some soldiers. The soldiers put Chenguang into the middle of the circle and pull off his clothes. The captain then shouts: "Everybody beat him."

The bamboo sticks in the hands of the conscripts come flying like snowflakes. Chenguang puts his hands over his head to protect himself...

It is night. There is the silhouette of the conscripts, a rope line and the band of conscripts... Chenguang gets special treatment: he has to drag along shackles on his feet...

Suddenly confusion arises among the contingent of conscripts, there is the sound of gunfire...there is shouting...

We hear the sound of the shackles on Chenguang's feet fade away as he hurries into the woods downhill...

The sound of shooting drifts over, uninterrupted gunfire. As the gunfire continues, Chenguang lifts the shackles with his hands and runs despite his great impediment...

Chenguang comes running out of the forest when a river blocks his further progress. Just then a black-awning boat comes across, propelled by a scull that squeaks 'yi-ya, yi-ya.' Chenguang rushes toward the boat, but falls into the water. He grabs onto the side of the boat trying to creep in, kicking the water, but is unable to climb up the side of the boat.

Suddenly a pair of strong arms lift him gently and throw him into the boat. He wants to get up, but the gunfire comes closer. There is also some shouting, so he ducks back into the boat lying quiet...

The black-awning boat glides along, not fast, not slow. A boat-girl calmly moves the scull from side to side...

"Stop," comes the shout of the captain from the shore, shooting off his gun.  
"Stop!"

The boat-girl calmly keeps moving the scull, merely quickening the tempo unobstrusively.

The shooting gradually grows dimmer. Chenguang raises his head and only slowly realizes that there is an old man in the stern of the boat, smoking and holding the tiller. Chenguang lifts his face higher and sees the moon flying out of the clouds. The silhouette of the boat-girl moving the scull appears before him. He is stupified; she looks so strong and handsome, contrasted against the clear moon of the night sky. Her large eyes reflect the moonlight. Her youthful features are especially charming under the moonlight. A small ring of white orchids are fastened to her temple, she wears an apron with printed blue flowers and bell-bottomed pants. The angle constantly changes with the changing directions of the boat, but she is beautiful from every angle. Her long queue falls over her full breasts. In Chenguang's eyes every moment presents a perfect picture.

The eyes of the boat-girl.

It is morning. The black-awning boat lies at anchor in a bay of the river. The girl, called Lu, takes the bamboo steamer from the small cauldron in the bow of the boat and serves rice with two small fishes on top. She brings two bowls, one for her father and one for Chenguang.

With his badly injured hands, Chenguang takes the bowl and devours the food ravenously, even chewing on the fishbones.

The boat-girl sits down in the stern of the boat and smiles happily...

Chenguang finishes his rice and goes to the bamboo steamer, but finds there is no more rice for a third bowl, so finally has to put down his bowl and the chopsticks.

Chenguang makes gestures of apology: You haven't eaten yet, what shall we do about it?...

The boat-girl smiles warmly and shakes her head...

Chenguang claps his hands together in a gesture of gratitude toward the boat-girl.

The boat-girl again smiles warmly and shakes her head...

Chenguang moves his feet with his hands when he discovers that his ankles are rubbed sore by the shackles.

The old man motions to the girl.

The girl gives the scull to her father, brings a wooden bowl, fills it with warm water from the kettle and brings it to Chenguang. She takes his feet and carefully washes them, then applies an ointment...



Chenguang looks gratefully at the girl. The girl looks up meets Chenguang's staring. Embarrassed, she lowers her head, smiling.

Chenguang again and again puts his palms together in a gesture of gratitude, the girl merely lowers her head and smiles...

The girl Lu moves the scull...

Chenguang, with half-opened eyes, lies in the compartment of the boat, he feels so warm and comfortable...

In front, far away, there is a racket of much shouting and also gunfire. The boat-girl stops her sculling.

A boat comes straight at them...

The old man asks the young man in that boat: "What is going on?"

"They seize conscripts!"

The two boats pass each other closely...

Chenguang jumps up in a fright and grabs his bundle.

The boat-girl signals him, not wanting him to go, but he does not understand.

"Sir! Young lady! I have to go..."

The old man asks: "Can you walk?"

"I...I don't want to go, but I have to go, I must not involve you..."

The boat-girl lowers her eyes to his two sore, bare feet.

"I am going!" Chenguang courageously stands up, steps out of the compartment and comes to stand exactly in front of the boat-girl.

The girl looks at him complainingly and with anxiety; he waves. An offscreen voice: "Reluctant to give up this short time of warmth? No! In a man's life voyage, everyone has many ports and harbors that he is reluctant to leave but has to leave..."

Chenguang gently asks her: "Young girl, what is your name?"

"Lu-niang!"

"Lu-niang..." and with one big stride Chenguang jumps from the deck of the boat to shore.

The eyes of the girl immediately fill with tears but she keeps moving the scull that keeps up its "yi-ya, yi-ya." She waits till her father is not looking, takes off one of her shoes and then throws it to where Chenguang is standing, and then the other shoe...

Chenguang picks them up and looks: a pair of worn-out girl's shoes embroidered with little flowers. He makes an effort to get into them and finds that he can indeed get into them with even the space of one finger to spare.

Well satisfied, Chenguang rests leaning against a stone. He has the embroidered shoes on and stomps his feet against the big stone.

The "yi-ya, yi-ya" sound of the scull, the silhouette of the boat-girl and the boat go further and further away, but do not disappear for a long time.

The reed marsh. The dawn of morning covers half the sky.

"And what then," asks Feng Hansheng like a small child listening to a story, "and what then?"

"Afterwards....," Chenguang narrows his eyes...

...The high-rise buildings of the Bund in Shanghai...

A mass of people rush along Shanghai's Bund like a tidal wave...

Slogans like "Down With Hunger! Down With Civil War! Down With Persecutions!" flash up among the crowd.

Leaflets flutter in the air. The camera lens seeks out the woodcut illustration on one of the leaflets, then on another, another and another...

The woodcuts fill the whole space of the leaflets showing hungry people either stretching out rice bowls or holding weapons and sticks, their eyes spurring flames of fury...

Chenguang is in the midst of the crowd and vigorously throws the woodcut leaflets into the air...

In one of his strong hands he holds the woodcutting knife, it is the knife that Juanjuan had given him with the "lover's knot" tassel tied to it...

The woodcutting knife glides over a wooden board with woodshavings curling up from it...

A shipping line's waiting room. Mr and Mrs Chen with their grown-up daughter Juanjuan sit on a long bench with suitcases and baskets in front of them.

Chenguang has his hands in his pockets as if doing nothing, but selectively presses propaganda leaflets into the hands of waiting passengers.

Chenguang comes to Juanjuan and presses one leaflet into her hands, saying quietly: "Miss! I hope that you will not be an idle bystander in the struggle for the liberation of our fatherland..."

Juanjuan looks up and recognizes him. She grabs his arm: "You! Are you not Mr Ling Chenguang?"

Chenguang hastily denies: "Miss! You are mistaking me, my name is not Ling!"

Juanjuan becomes impatient: "I am not mistaken. I am Juanjuan! This is my father and my mother!"

Thus, Chenguang recognizes the whole family and immediately greets them: "Mr Chen, Mrs Chen, you are here..."

Juanjuan answers: "We are going abroad!"

"Going abroad? At this time...?"

"Mr Ling," says Mr Chen, "it looks to me, there is no hope for our fatherland. Why don't you come with us!"

Mrs Chen says: "Go away, Mr Ling!"

"Go," says Juanjuan with warm emotions "the captain of this ship is an old friend of my father; we can easily get you a ticket."

"No," says Chenguang. "My way of looking at things is exactly the opposite of yours. Prospects for our fatherland are not hopeless, but very hopeful." He points at the window where one can see the masses outside demonstrating, "Is that not hopeful?"

Juanjuan's eyes follow Chenguang's every expression.

Mrs Chen says: "You may be thinking in too simple terms!"

Juanjuan is deeply disappointed. She is again and again twisting her hands. With a pained look at Chenguang she says gently: "Can't you think it over again?...I beg you to think it over again..."

"No!" Chenguang firmly replies. "I have thought this over long ago!"

Juanjuan covers her face...

A bell rings and the passengers begin to get up from their seats.

Juanjuan makes no move...

When Juanjuan lifts her face from her hands, she is already on deck of the moving passenger liner; the ocean-going liner has just raised its anchor in the Huangpu River and moves away from the shore. Her father and mother stand behind her.

Chenguang leans against a railing ashore, sending them off. He smiles lightly as he waves to them...

With trembling lips, Juanjuan begins to sing: (Repeat of first stanza)

The sun, as before, is generous  
And we are going to be parted by the ends of the earth.

The moon, as before, is gentle and soft,  
But he is not beside me,  
The stars, as before, are cordially warm;  
To whom can I unburden my heartfelt sorrows.

The reed marsh.

Feng Hansheng sighs as he says: "Oh, you were really lucky, why have I not once in my life experienced such a romantic affair? What a pity!..."

The camera lens returns to Soochow Creek in Shanghai before liberation; it is night...

Special agents in plain clothes are firing at Chenguang who is running away...

Chenguang jumps into one of the black-awning boats. The boat people push him out. He jumps into another black-awning boat and is again pushed out by the boatmen...

Again he jumps into another black-awning boat and presses on into its passenger compartment. This boat, however, is moving, first slowly then faster, it slides into the middle of the Huangpu River...

When Chenguang peeps out from the compartment he has a great surprise: in the stern of the boat, culling the boat, is none other than Lu-niang, whose features had appeared to him innumerable times in his dreams. He walks out of the compartment and walks up to Lu-niang. Her eyes full of tears, she gazes at him.

Behind Lu-niang we see the lights of the metropolis, the silhouettes of sails on the river and the water of the river as it reflects the moonlight...

She slowly goes down on her knees on the boat deck and mumbles: "God in heaven, there are a million roads in this world, but you at last led us to a crossroad to meet again..." So saying, she begins to cry silently...

There are tears in Chenguang's eyes.

Lu-niang looks at him as he slowly walks toward her. Chenguang holds out his hands; Lu-niang bows low. Chenguang puts his arms around her shoulder and helps her up.

The moonlight concentrates on them full of emotions and with great warmth.

They embrace and kiss for a long time...

The boat slowly gyrates in the middle of the river...

In the boat's compartment Lu-niang opens a cloth bundle, out come three pairs of men's shoes. Both laugh while their eyes are full of tears.

Unattended as it is, the tiller swings back and forth...

Lu-niang gives her father's long-stemmed pipe to Chenguang. Chenguang lights the pipe and walks to the boat's stern where he sits down at the tiller. He motions to Lu-niang who walks over and starts sculling.



The scull squeaks its "yi-ya, yi-ya."

Under a high ladder, thousands of students look up to the top of the ladder where Chenguang stands, appearing very small. He is wielding a brush and painting a propaganda picture: a young worker who calls on the people to fight.

An ear-piercing shot rings out...

The students standing around the ladder stretch their hands out to Chenguang and call: "Come down! Come down! Quick!"

Chenguang calmly finishes the last strokes of his picture and then slides down from the ladder.

Repeated gunshots...

In the reed marsh. Chenguang and Feng Hansheng suddenly jump up and take flight. There is the sound of shots and of shouting...

A search boat races along over the lake.

Chenguang and Feng Hansheng flee in great haste through the reeds...

...The Shanghai of former days. Chenguang, shielded by two students, runs into a small alleyway, bullets pierce the wall...

In the reed marsh...Chenguang and Feng Hansheng flee with lightning speed in the shallow reed-overgrown water.

...The Shanghai of former days. As shots ring out, Chenguang and the students climb over the wall of someone's garden.

In the reed marsh. Uninterrupted gunfire and shouting...

Chenguang and Feng Hansheng creep deeper into the dense growth of reeds...

The gunfire and the shouting gradually grow more distant.

Chenguang and Feng Hansheng face each other panting and gasping for breath... The lake and the marshland have gone completely quiet.

Still gasping, Feng Hansheng asks gently: "And what later? My young man!"

Without stopping panting, Chenguang responds: "...and later..."

...In the engine room of a ship. A sailor throws Chenguang a lighted cigarette. Starting to smoke, Chenguang asks the sailor: "Where is this ship going?"

"America!"

"What!" Chenguang immediately jumps up, "America?!"

The sailors nod.

Chenguang immediately climbs up the staircase, but a sailor quickly pulls him down, pushes him to a porthole and makes him look through it.

Outside the porthole there is a landing stage where one can only see the puttees and rifle butts of a row of gendarmes...

"No!" Chenguang still struggles to get to the staircase, "I can't leave my fatherland..."

The sailor again grabs him and pulls him down. Chenguang tries again, the sailor again pulls him down, goes up himself, closes and locks the door... Chenguang gives up hope and sits in one corner panting. Painfully, he gazes through the little window.

All noise is gone. He hears the tinkling of the aeolian bells, music from the broken-down organ, the clapper of the nightwatchman, the sound of the reed pipes... With these sounds, he sees in his mind his native place where he had lived, the beautiful landscape of his native country...kites...beautiful river banks, the egrets flying up from the paddy fields, the green mountains with fog hanging on them, the moon shining through the trees, the lotus pond in rosy sunset...

With one leap he is up; he rushes to the porthole, the foam of breaking waves covers the window, the diesel engine has started up...

One hears the rattling of the anchor chain, the ship is trembling and moves away from the shore.

The porthole clears again. Chenguang sees a black-awning boat gradually heading toward the ship...coming closer and closer...he recognizes that it is Lu-niang who sculls the boat, he waves at her, calls her...

Chenguang sees a most beautifully blue sky and under this sky, Lu-niang vigorously sculls her boat. She moves the scull to and fro. Her hair is blown about by the wind...now she is already so close...

A long blow by the ship's steam whistle, endlessly long...  
The ship has left the harbor and the diesel engine increases its speed.  
The distance between Lu-niang's wooden boat with its scull and the steamer also increases.

Chenguang, in a futile effort, calls out to her and waves through the porthole...  
Lu-niang is working hard at the scull, contrasted against the river banks that are a soft yellow with the flowers of vegetables...  
Clouds move slowly over a mostly clear sky, seagulls fly about...  
The steamer in front of her gets further and further away, but she stubbornly keeps sculling...  
Chenguang madly shouts from the porthole, waves at her and gazes at her...

Lu-niang is still vigorously sculling...  
The steamer has become a black spot on the horizon...  
Lu-niang pushes the scull to and fro...Her pretty face, wet with tears, is contrasted against the bright blue sky and the white clouds...

In the reed marsh. Feng Hansheng sighs and says: "Oh...Although I was never loved by another person in all my life, I have experienced similar emotions.

In 1931, against great odds I was able to get a government scholarship for studies abroad. When I clutched the railing on board ship, I cried a lot. Love must be tasting about the same! In my life it has always been a one-sided love, an unrequited love. A short time ago somebody guaranteed he could for sure get me sent abroad; he said I could live there with the most modern conveniences. I said, thank you, I rather like the primitive life in this here country!..."

Chenguang, deep in thought, gazes into the distance: "Your analogy is very correct!....One-sided love, unrequited love..."

The reed marsh at dusk is amazingly beautiful. The gentle waves reflect the light of the setting sun. The setting sun shoots out a thousand rays from clouds over the horizon... The water fowl return, reluctant in the end to leave the radiantly beautiful sky.

Chenguang gently says: "My elder friend! See how beautiful; our country is really beautiful. Too bad, I have no paper, paints and painting brush..."

"You...You really are an incorrigible sentimentalist! There is paper, paints and painting brush, I will borrow it for you!"

"If you can get me paper, paints and a painting brush, I will...will..."  
Chenguang did not know what else to say, "...I will hug you!"

"You hugged me once already, the minute we met you hugged me, when you were in the end thrown by this little old man..." Feng Hansheng laughs highly pleased with himself, laughs till tears come to his eyes.

There is the sound of wild geese in the sky; the two men turn their heads to look at them...

Flocks of wild geese fly over in the blue sky, there is one flock after another flying over in formation in the blue sky...

An American seacoast city toward the end of the forties. In brilliant sunshine, rows and rows of more-storied houses, white as snow. On the bathing beach, thousands of men and women sunbathing, many-colored sunshades like multicolored mushrooms.

A modern art gallery. What first meets the eye is a large advertising signboard, "Exhibition of Paintings by Ling Chenguang." On the signboard is a portrait of Lu-niang, smiling. A stream of elegantly dressed people move in and out of the door.

Car after car of streamlined sedans keep arriving. .

When one special black sedan drives up to the front door, the mass of people crowding around the door all direct their attention to this car...immediately a large number of cameras focus on that car...

A bearded janitor walks over to open the car door. Dressed in a trim foreign suit and wearing a pair of sunglasses, Chenguang steps out of the car. At first sight we hardly recognize him, with his small well-trimmed beard and a big pipe between his lips. As a matter of course, the crowd opens a path for him. Flashlights go off uninterruptedly, men and women very respectfully crowd around him, bringing their notebooks and asking for autographs. Chenguang hastily signs his autographs and pushes through the crowd to enter the art gallery. Inside the art gallery it is very quiet. Astounded and admirably, people enjoy Chenguang's paintings. They are either traditional Chinese paintings, woodcuts, oil paintings or ornamental paintings, all depicting Chinese scenery and Chinese people a feast for the eyes.

Outside the main gate of the gallery, a Chinese woman stands in front of the Ling Chenguang Art Gallery signboard; she is very shabbily dressed and tears well up in her eyes. She gazes at the portrait of Lu-niang on the signboard.

When this woman turns around we recognize her as in fact being Lu-niang, only looking sadder and older than on the portrait...She walks to the gate but the janitor asks her for her entrance ticket. Her hands sweep her pockets as she walks to the ticket window and she dumps out all the coins she has, but a gloved girl's hand in the ticket window waves her negatively.

Lu-niang walks to the large advertising signboard. She stands with her back to the wall, feeling very tired, she closes her eyes.

A golden-haired young lady sees the surprising resemblance of the woman with the portrait on the signboard and waves for her boyfriend to have a look. Soon a large number of people also take note of the curious coincidence and many start photographing her.

Lu-niang stands uneasily in front of the signboard.

The golden-haired lady gives Lu-niang an entrance ticket which bears the self-portrait of Chenguang. Lu-niang bows deeply to the lady to express her great gratitude.

Lu-niang walks into the picture gallery and the first thing that strikes her are the many portraits that Chenguang painted of the boat-girl Lu-niang... She turns to look at the many, many pictures depicting landscapes of the fatherland, its mountains, waterways, forests, flowers and birds, and also its people who suffered so many hardships and who are struggling and fighting...

Her eyes become blurred. When she regains clear eyesight, a stranger stands in front of her, an elegant gentleman. A little white kerchief sticks in the breastpocket of his Western-style jacket. But the gentleman smiles at her and she is somewhat embarrassed. When he comes closer, Lu-niang discovers some very familiar features in his face, and it is then that she recognizes that this is Ling Chenguang. Ling Chenguang takes off his glasses and holds out his arms to her. Lu-niang awrily collapses in front of him. Chenguang hastily kneels down and embraces her.



Lu-niang says: "Is this real? Is it real? Not a dream?"

"No! If you don't believe it, bite me!"

Lu-niang takes it seriously and bites his shoulder and in doing so gives vent to her love and past frustrations...The onlookers sob and sigh as they crowd around this reunion of husband and wife...

Chengguang, overcome by happiness, explains to the onlookers:

"She is my wife! My lover! My sister! My life! My daytime and night..."

There is an outburst of happy laughter among the onlookers as they clap their hands in applauding this reunion...

A black sedan drives into the garden of a villa. It stops in front of the steps into the house and a black maidservant stands at the door to meet them. Chengguang helps Lu-niang out of the car.

Chengguang leads Lu-niang through an elegant, carpeted drawing room into a well-illuminated studio, then there is a dining room, a living room, a bedroom... When they enter the bedroom, the recordplayer automatically lifts a record into place and the warm and soft tunes of a waltz are heard...

Chengguang gently and softly embraces Lu-niang and says: "Is it nice here?"

Lu-niang slowly shakes her head and pulls out a sheet of the Overseas Chinese newspaper with the banner headline "The Chinese people have risen!" It also shows the photo of a five-star red flag fluttering in the wind...

Chengguang pulls out the same newspaper page from his pocket...

The camera lens returns to the reed marsh. It is already night. The two escapees sit cross-legged opposite each other and smoke. The occasional fire in their pipes lights up their stern faces.

"...yes!" Feng Hansheng says, "no true Chinese intellectuals will place the material life in first place!"

Chengguang continues: "At that time we were almost sick with homesickness. We demanded in strong terms to return to China and were expelled by the government of the country of residence. They confiscated all our possessions..."

At the gate of the art gallery in that certain American city. Some workmen are just dismantling the large signboard announcing the exhibition of Ling Chengguang's pictures.

A white limousine drives by, suddenly stops and a lady in a white overcoat steps out of the car. It is Juanjuan. She walks to the workmen and asks them:

"Is this exhibition just starting?"

"Have you just come to America?"

"Yes! From Europe!"

"It is not just starting, but just closing."

"Closing so soon!" Juanjuan says, full of regret.

"No! This exhibition of paintings was on for over a year. It was the longest exhibition ever held in this gallery..."

"And the painter?"

"Returned to his country..."

"What? Returned to his country?"

"Now just boarding ship..."

"What ship?"

"It is the 'Sainte Jeanne d'Arc', young lady!" the workman replies, handing her an invalidated entrance ticket, "keep it as a souvenir!"

Juanjuan sees Chenguang's portrait on the ticket and her eyes immediately fill with tears.

From offscreen the gentle sound of the tune "We met under the light of the sun" drifts in...

There is the piercing long drawn-out sound of the steam whistle.  
The 'Sainte Jeanne d'Arc' has left her moorings.

Chenguang has his arm around Lu-niang as they stand on the ship's deck. They are full of hope and confidence. They don't look back, but look ahead. In the background is the city of a foreign country.

The steamer ploughs ahead through the waves.

An offscreen voice: "Meeting the wind that blows from the East, from the fatherland; meeting the sun that rises from the East, from the fatherland, the sons and daughters of the fatherland return home!"

Translucent spray of ocean water moistens the faces of Chenguang and Lu-niang.

Closely together, the two engage in some whispering. Lu-niang strokes her belly and says: "Our son...or maybe our daughter...is moving..."

"The time of birth is approaching, isn't it? Lu-niang...?"

"It will be soon, how lucky for the baby, to be born in the New China!"

"But if it will be born prematurely?"

Lu-niang covers his mouth with her hand: "Don't say that, he will surely be born in the New China!"

"Will it?"

"Certainly!"

"Ah!"

"Absolutely!"

"I agree, a hundred times, a thousand times..."

"Agreeing is not enough, you must guarantee it!"

"Guarantee," Chenguang is embarrassed, but he has to say, "that's right, I absolutely guarantee!"

"We lost everything, we don't even have money for traveling..." Lu-niang sighs.

"That is right!" says Chenguang excitedly. "But did we not get something that is even more? We finally are on our way back, we are on our way home!"

On the ship's deck, several Chinese are scrubbing the deck, among them is Chenguang. Next to him is a middle-aged man with moustache and beard, a cravat fluttering in front of his chest. Next to the middle-aged man is an emaciated woman who coughs all the time.

Chenguang asks him: "What is your name?"

"My name is Xie Qiushan..."

"Oh! The poet! I often read your poems in the Overseas Chinese newspaper..."

Xie Qiushan points to the emaciated woman and introduces: "This is my wife, Yunying."

"How do you do!"

"How do you do!" says Yunying holding out her hand but she has another fit of coughing.

Full of concern, Chenguang says: "You are not well..."

Yunying smiles: "It will be alright. Once we are back in our fatherland, it will be alright, everything will be alright!"

Chenguang nods his head in approval.

Yunying says: "It looks to me your wife will soon give birth!"

"No! She wants to give birth in New China!"

"That is excellent!"

In the cabin of the ship near the porthole. Lu-niang lies in Chenguang's lap, groaning with pain. Yunying and Xie Qiushan are at the side changing warm towels and helping her with hot compresses...

Lu-niang mutters and continuously asks: "Have we arrived in our fatherland? Can you see our fatherland? Hear the sounds of our fatherland?"

In a low voice Chenguang answers: "Very soon...very soon...very soon..."

Lu-niang's labor pains increase, she shouts loud.

Yunying quickly grabs a bedsheet and gives a corner to Qiushan: "Quick, hang it up and turn your face away!"

Xie Qiushan pulls the corner of the bedsheet, turns round and with a low voice recites a poem:

God never created mankind,  
But he received praise and veneration for almost 2,000 years!  
There are also innumerable churches,  
Where bells have been ringing for 2,000 years uninterruptedly.  
The creator of mankind is man himself.  
Mankind has created itself--including God.  
For this creation we must suffer limitless oceans of pain,  
Even though the happiness we gain is small as a translucent drop of  
water...

A strange, unexpected sound startles Qiushan, "Wah..." a new life has entered this world.

Lu-niang shakes her head and groans: "Fatherland...fatherland...have we arrived in our fatherland?"

Chenguang regretfully says: "We are still at sea.."

"At sea? How unfortunate for the baby, to be born in a foreign country..."

"No! We are probably still on the high seas..."

"No!" shouts Qiushan, "we are not on the high seas, these are the territorial waters of our fatherland!"

Chenguang lifts Lu-niang's head; they look through the porthole...

There is a lighthouse on which the beloved beautiful five-star red flag flutters in the wind...

From offscreen there is the loud crying of an infant...

The red flag flutters in the wind...

Tears of joy stream from Lu-niang's eyes...

"Ah...our fatherland...and the child?"

Yunying gives her the baby, well bundled up. Lu-niang asks: "Is it a...?"

"Lu-niang, it is a, or perhaps...", says Chenguang stupidly, "let's give it a name!"

"That's right..." Lu-niang mumbles, "let's give it a name..."

The gentle five-star red flag slowly waves back and forth...The five stars emit a golden radiance...

Lu-niang says: "Let's call the baby Xingxing [stars]!"

A long blast of the steam whistle reverberates as if as a ceremonial welcome for the birth of Xingxing...

Lu-niang lovingly kisses the baby whose little face glistens with tears.

The long-drawn-out whistle of the locomotive, as a long railway train traverses the beautiful plains and fields of the fatherland...

Lu-niang with the baby in her arms huddles close to the window and looks at the home country, so beautiful as brocade...

Chenguang, Qiushan and Yunying all huddle together like children, trying to take up just a little space at the window...

An offscreen voice: "Everyone cherishes the memory of New China in the fifties. Everything was so new! So firm and steadfast! Especially as the whole nation exerted itself to make the country strong. So firm and strong! New China, what a wonderful beginning you had!"

Fireworks paint a marvelous design on the sky...



Chenguang, Lu-niang, Xingxing, Qiushan and Yunying are among the happy crowd that came to watch the fireworks at Tiananmen...

At the seaside sanatorium, along a sunny large corridor, a file of patients are waiting in line to be weighed.

Qiushan supports Yunying as she steps on the scale, then happily shouts:

"This week I gained again one kilo..."

"Congratulations!"

Chenguang and Lu-niang solemnly hold out their hands to congratulate her.

Yunying, with sincere emotions, laughs a laugh that tinkles like silver bells.

Brilliant sunshine. An island of birds.

Flocks of little birds fly off the carpet of green grass.

The sky is full of little birds; they twitter and chirp...

Among the fluttering flocks of birds, Chenguang and Lu-niang, having brought along their little daughter, run around, race along and shout intoxicated with happiness...

The little girl chases the young birds that cannot yet fly very well. She does not really catch them. When they fly up, she gazes after them with half-closed eyes and laughs. Then she opens her arms like wings as if to fly, but falls on the grass. She does not cry, but starts to roll on the grass...

Holding the little girl by her hands, Chenguang and Lu-niang gallop around with flocks of birds all around them...

Bird wings fill the entire screen...

A profusion of birds flying against the sunlight...

Flocks of birds whirling around...

Chenguang running around laughing in a carefree mood...

The face of Lu-niang happily laughing...

The little girl running with her arms spread out...

A summer camp. A group of Young Pioneers with red scarves dance and sing on the beach and change formation. Among the hundreds of Young Pioneers, there are two adults, also wearing the red scarves. They are Chenguang and Qiushan. They are as lively active as the youngsters...

Chenguang's eyes; superimpose his own youthful years when he led a vagrant life with a bundle on his back...

Formations of red scarves like a bed of flowers undergo a myriad changes in the twinkling of an eye; a happy chorus of youthful singers...

Chenguang stands on a piece of land of the fatherland; it has just been ploughed and weeded and is still slightly steaming. In the distance a tower of a high-tension line.

There are tears in Chenguang's eyes...

The tune of the theme song suddenly pours forth...

Chenguang's eyes; superimposed appear the Wu mountains, holding some clouds and rain falling...

Chenguang is painting "Mist and Rain in the Three Gorges." He shakes his head, crumples the picture up into a ball and throws it away... Chenguang's eyes; superimposed appears a group of various nationalities of Xinjiang people joyously attending a fair...

Chenguang is painting "The Tianshan Mountain Range Is Singing." Again he shakes his head, crumples the picture into a ball and throws it away...

Chenguang's eyes; superimposed appears a mountainous forest, red with azaleas. Chenguang is painting "Fiery Red Mountain." Again he shakes his head, crumples the picture into a ball and throws it away...

Lu-niang picks up the sheets one by one and straightens them out... She points out the wall clock to her husband, but Chenguang pretends not to see.

She walks up to him and tries to take the paintbrush from his hand, which he holds tightly and would not let go, saying: "Let me paint! No matter how I paint, I somehow cannot express the new face of our fatherland, not even half-way...oh, how incapable, I!"

An offscreen voice: "That was the distress of the Chinese writers and artists of that time; it was in a way a happy and yet also sweet distress...We wish this distress will last throughout our present and our next lifetimes..."

Back again to the reed marsh where the two escapees are hiding. Feng Hansheng with tears in his eyes says: "Ah! Our fatherland, how beautiful you are, how good and honest your people, suffering extreme distress; dying for you is well worth it!

Chenguang adds excitedly: "Even in my present condition, would I have brush, paper and paints, I would paint like drunk and like mad!"

"Young friend!" Feng Hansheng suddenly jumps up and claps his chest, "I am leaving this moment..."

Chenguang excitedly hugs Feng Hansheng.

"Thank you and many, many thanks...you won't meet with a mishap?!"

"Don't worry...I will certainly be back before the sun is up."

With great agility, Feng Hansheng disappears into the night; the reed marsh is silent;

Chenguang lies sideways, using his arms as a pillow. Some ashes from his pipe are spilled over his face.

Clouds and mist fill the screen. Out of the mist, there appear a very long flight of stairs. Chenguang mounts up the flight of steps, higher and higher. He hears the tinkling of the aeolian bells and continues to go up. On such huge steps, how small a man appears... He sees a magnificent temple and hears the sonorous sound of the big temple bell...He enters the dark main hall where the smoke of incense is curling up. The huge statue of Buddha is no more golden, but blackened.

Chenguang looks intently at Buddha.

From offscreen comes Chenguang's childhood voice: "Why is the venerable Buddha so black?"

In the big main hall the temple elder answers in a serious voice:

"The incense burned by faithful men and women has stained him black..."

"Ah?"

"Is that strange? Child, in this world there are many things where consequences come out exactly the opposite of what the good intentions had been..."

Chenguang ponders this question a hundred times without being able to understand and specially write down...

Chenguang walks along a big street of Beijing with a lost feeling and completely wrapped in his own thoughts as if sleepwalking.

The street is full of people waving the "Quotations of Chairman Mao," all those devout and artless faces fired by a feverish fanaticism...

Chenguang stands in front of a narrow and small firewood storage room, part of a quadrangle of houses. He hesitatingly pushes open its door.

He is faced with a dim, dark little room. Its walls are dilapidated, spider webs are all over the place, the floorspace is occupied, apart from baggage and baskets just brought in, up to half of its space by honeycomb briquets that had not yet been removed. Among all this baggage, the trunks, small chairs, toys, there sit, askew, his wife Lu-niang and daughter Ling Xingxing. They gaze silently at Chenguang who is now coming into the room.

Xingxing pitifully asks Chenguang: "Papa, why were we made to move in here?"

Chenguang does not answer her.

Xingxing grumbles complainingly: "There are no windows, there is no sunlight, there is no air, one cannot see the sky..."

Chenguang silently picks up a wooden board and begins to put the honeycomb briquets on the board. He lifts the board and motions to his wife and daughter to pile more briquets on. Lu-niang moves over and helps him put more briquets on the board, till they are breast-high, he motions for more and Xingxing also puts one briquet on for her father. Lu-niang then turns him to go. Chenguang strenuously moves the briquets out.

Lu-niang also sets to moving briquets and so does Xingxing.

The whole room is black, only one little spark of fire glimmers. As the camera zooms in on it we see that it is the fire in the tobacco pipe.

With a certain rhythm, it lights up the face of Chenguang who is lost in thought. He sits on a low stool against the wall. On a spread on the floor, Xingxing and her mother are sleeping...

The little spark of light flickers, on, off, on, off...

Chenguang slowly gets up, strikes a match and lights an oil lamp. He shades the lights with his hand, so as not to waken his wife and daughter. The lamp

in one hand, he cleans one section of the wall with his other hand, removes the spider webs...He takes out his palette and also his paintbrushes, mixes up paint and starts to paint on the wall...

Lu-niang props up her head and looks at her husband...

The oil lamp gradually gives out, but the room, on the contrary, lights up... Xingxing drowsily rubs her eyes; she discovers that there is light in the room, she searches and suddenly, there is a bright window in front of her eyes, outside the window there are winter jasmine flowers, rosy morning clouds and blue sky. Xingxing jumps up and pats her mother:

"Look at that! Now we have a window, blue sky, rosy dawn, flowers...how beautiful!"

Chenguang, who naps still holding on to his palette and paintbrush, is awakened by the noise.

The little family of three, full of zest, jumps with joy.

The little daughter helps her father hanging pictures on the walls, first of all, mother's portrait in oil that had been painted when mother was young. Mother begins to put all kitchen and eating utensils in order...all have come to life again.

An offscreen voice: "A human being wants to go on living, wants to work, wants to struggle! If there is no window, paint on a window. When gloomy and cold, paint on a warm spring! The world is not created by God, but by man! In this narrow and small empty room, let us then create a wide and vast world!"

Chenguang and his daughter are hanging up a paint-splattered rug.

The tiny little room has been well put into order. From wooden boards a bookstand has been nailed, together and also a raw wooden bench. On the wall facing the bright window, a pretty pair of antlers was painted as well as an elegant tapestry.

Chenguang is engaged in his painting.

Lu-niang silently peels peanuts...

Xingxing is bent over a small stool painting a cat of her own fantasy.

With an overloud sigh of "ah," an old man with graying hair comes in with his emaciated wife. Xingxing rushes over, shouting: "Uncle poet has come!"

Chenguang puts down his brush and calls happily: "Qiushan!"

Lu-niang calls "Yunying!"

Chenguang puts his arm around Xie Qiushan's shoulder: "I thought you would come back..."

Xie Qiushan shakes his silvery head and says: "I come to say good-bye!"

"Good-bye?" asks Lu-niang startled.

With a sigh, Xie Qiushan says: "We have both been promoted! You should congratulate us!"

"...?"



"From the proverbial 'monsters and demons'--class enemies--we have been raised and promoted to '7 May' fighters. I have to go to the land of Chu, she has to go to the land of Lu, one south, one north, maybe the story of 'The Cowboy and the Spinning Maid' gave them the idea. The less husband and wife see each other, the better will they accomplish their ideological remolding!"

A wry smile came to the faces of Chenguang and Lu-niang.

Yunying pulled her husband's sleeve and said, choking with sobs: "I am worried about your health..."

"Is your health better than mine?" said Qiushan and tapped his wife on the shoulder. "It hasn't come yet to singing the 'bie yao' [departure] song and if it comes to singing, let's not sing it in other people's houses..."

In comes an old peasant with a basket filled with vegetables, carrots...

He quietly puts down his basket.

Lu-niang says to him: "Grandpa Zhang, you always bring us fresh things."

Xingxing says: "Grandpa Zhang, did you bring this for Papa to paint a still life?"

Grandpa Zhang laughs: "It also can be eaten!" With these words he sits down in a corner and starts to smoke. He smiles as he looks around in a surprised way...

Another man enters. He is an old military man, has one arm only and no insignia on his uniform color and military cap. He carries a squirrel cage. Purposely overdoing it, Qiushan shouts:

"Stand at attention! The general is honoring us with his presence! Where would the general want to go?"

"Some people are afraid we will start a rebellion in Beijing, so they send us to do manual labor in the countryside," the general said in a quiet, humorous voice, "...but actually the countryside is a good place to start a rebellion!"

An 8-year old girl comes in carrying a bird cage and says, as if reciting something learned by heart: "Our whole family has to leave tomorrow for somewhere beyond Zhangjiakou to go and settle in the countryside. Father and mother are packing. They told me to bring our little magpie to you, uncle and auntie. Would you please take care of him? Father and mother would be extremely grateful to you..."

It became very quiet in the room, not only quiet, but depressingly quiet. The little girl put the cage down, bowed silently, turned and left.

The general is the first to break the silence: "When she spoke, she also spoke for me!" He puts the squirrel cage on the stool.

Xie Quishan pulls a little turtle from his pocket and gives it to Xingxing:

"This is an old friend of mine that I want to introduce to you!"

"Does he bite, poet uncle?"

"No!" But he is smarter than I am, he knows how to defend himself. Your uncle is so incapable, he does not even know how to defend himself!"

"Lu-niang," Chenguang calls out and in order to break the depressing atmosphere tells his wife: "Don't we still have a little liquor!"

"Ah," Lu-niang quickly brings glasses and pours the liquor, for each person one glass.

"Uncle poet...", says Xingxing bringing him a glass, "Isn't it that when drinking wine, one should make a poem?"

"I have a poem," says Qiushan and starts to recite a poem with a low voice but with intense emotion:

Since we are comrades, comrades-in-arms, fellow countrymen,  
Why do you want to set up traps for me?  
Since you want to put shackles on me,  
Why again show a smiling face?  
Since you prepare to stab me from behind,  
Why again embrace and hug me?  
You closed our mouths with many, many seals,  
While our brains are now full of question marks!  
Ah, why do true comrades, comrades-in-arms and fellow countrymen  
Not illuminate each other like the stars!

Qiushan's tears fall into his wine glass, since it was so quiet in the room, all hear the sound...

Yunying sobs silently...

Qiushan raises his wineglass, everybody raises glasses...

Suddenly, Xingxing says loud to her father: "Papa I want to cry." The corners of her mouth are drooping miserably.

Chenguang shakes his head seriously, he forks his middle finger and index finger and pushes up the two corners of his own mouth...

With tears still in her eyes, Xingxing smiles and the corners of her mouth lift upward.

Qiushan drains the glass with one gulp...

Everybody else drains glasses...

The reed marsh where the escapees hide. Chenguang is alone, smoking; he is smoking for quite a while. Suddenly Feng Hansheng appears with a large bag on his back. In his left hand he holds a palette like a shield, in his right hand a roll of paper like a spear. He shouts at Chenguang: "Look here, I got everything..."

Chenguang jumps up to welcome him back.

He hands the palette and paper to Chenguang, then he dumps everything out from his bag: foodstuffs, paints, paintbrushes. Chenguang happily checks out the paints and finds that there is not enough blue paint. He says: "Too bad, there is not enough of the blue paint!"

"That will not do," says Feng Hansheng, "the proportion of blue in the world is very large. I heard the space travelers saw the orb on which we humans live is a small blue ball...I shall immediately go out and borrow some blue paint!" and he makes a sweeping good-bye motion.

"Don't! It will be daylight soon!"

"It does not matter, I will certainly be back before sunrise tomorrow!" and turns to go. "Just in case...if I cannot come back...no, I certainly will be back."

Feng Hansheng goes toward the sun which is just coming over the horizon. The morning breeze blows the torn coat and tattered shirt.

The tune of the theme song is being heard.

For a long time Chenguang gazes after the disappearing Feng Hansheng, he wanted to call for him to stop, but did not call out.

The waves of reed rise and fall, the wind is whistling.

A flock of wild geese fly over the reed marsh in "ren" formation...

One late evening, Chenguang strains his eyes looking for someone...

The platform of Beijing railway station. Passengers silently alight from a train and silently move away. After a while all passengers are gone and Chenguang alone is left on the empty, bleak platform. He is disappointed.

At this moment, one person haltingly steps down from the last car of the train. He tucks his hands into his sleeves. He has no baggage at all.

He slowly walks over and we soon recognize this person as no one else but Qiushan. He has a straw rope around his waist. Chenguang stretches out both hands and calls out loud: "Qiushan!" Qiushan's eyes react slowly, only his lips tremble. Chenguang hugs Qiushan closely: "You have come back...old Xie!"

Qiushan says in a low voice: "Come back? What do you mean 'back'? Where have I originally been?"

"Here in Beijing, you have a home..."

"Home....," Qiushan looks perplexed.

Home--Qiushan's home is in a small compound in an alleyway. Qiushan and Chenguang stand in front of the eastern wing-room and Qiushan gropes for the doorway. Chenguang lights a rusty doorlock with his flashlight. Qiushan's hands shake and he has difficulties putting the key into the lock. As Chenguang gives it a pull, the lock comes off. They enter and strike a light. There really was nothing but the four bare walls; the paint had peeled off the walls, bookcase and bedstead were empty...there was a letter very conspicuously placed on the floor. Qiushan bends down to get it, opens it and sees the eye-catching heading "Notification of Death." Attached to it was a photo of the gaunt, pain-scarred face of Yunying near her death...Qiushan's face twitched as if to laugh or cry. The letter in his hands shook like a leaf in the autumn wind. He hands the letter and photo to Chenguang who takes letter and photo...

From offscreen we hear Yunying's coughing and her voice: "All will be well, once we will be back in our fatherland, it will be well, all will be well."

Chenguang gazes at the photo.

Yunying's voice from offscreen: "Ah! This week I gained another kilo..."

Chenguang and Lu-niang's voices: "Our congratulations!"

Yunying chuckles, a laugh like silver bells.

Chenguang sits on the empty bedstead, completely stupefied...He closes his eyes in pain and presses the letter and the photo back in to Qiushan's lifeless hands, saying: "Qiushan, I must go to attend a meeting..." Qiushan does not reply, only his lips tremble for a moment. Chenguang pushes the door open, there is the sudden noise of a rainstorm. Chenguang dashes out. There is a clap of thunder, lightning flashes; against this background we see Qiushan hysterically laughing like mad...

The rain does down in sheets. The streetlights and the streams of rain give a grotesque and gaudy picture. At the bus stop Chenguang is waiting, pressed against the wall of a house. It is not so much that he wants to avoid the rain, but that he also wants the rain water to drench him inside and outside, be drenched from head to foot, completely, like a drenched chicken. There is another "drenched chicken" standing nearby, a young man with some baggage on his back, now also completely soaked by the rain. A rope is strapped around his neck as if he were to be led to the execution ground. He stands numbly, allowing the rain to drench him. On the other side of the broad street is an 8- or 9-year old girl, a key dangles from her neck. She stands motionless under her torn umbrella. Benumbed and fixedly she gazes at the young man. The young man waves at her all the time to go, but she does not move. Stubbornly she stands and gazes at the young man. Chenguang had not seen the young man before, but asks him gently:

"Who is she?"

"My younger sister."

"Her father?"

"Dead."

"Her mother?"

"Dead," the young man answers as if these things concern somebody else.

"Where are you going?"

"Inner Mongolia..."

Chenguang is silent, he desperately bites his lips.

The young man vigorously waves to his sister.

The sister does not move like an immobile object standing solidly in the rain.

The streetlights sway in the rainstorm, lighting up and going dark...

The rain water runs down Chenguang's face unchecked, in the distance there is the rumbling of thunder...

The bus comes and the young man gets on the bus. In the rain, Chenguang and the devoted sister remain to send off the bus with their eyes as it drives off into the distance.

Again at the reed marsh; it is morning.

The reed moves up and down like waves; the wind sighs and sighs.

Chenguang holds the palette and in the direction that Feng Hansheng took when he left, Chenguang paints Feng Hansheng's return, but actually there is no sign of Feng Hansheng. He puts down the paintbrush, stealthily proceeds forward, looks into the distance, but there is still no sign of anybody.



From offscreen we hear Feng Hansheng's voice: "...I will certainly be back tomorrow before the sun is up. If by any chance...I cannot come back, no, I certainly will be able to come back!"

The reed moves up and down in waves; the wind sighs and sighs...

"Oh, he did not come back..."

The tune of the main themesong is being heard...

Chenguang painfully gazes into the distance. On the distant horizon a flock of wild geese come flying over; their formation of a straight line changes into the "ren" formation.

Again back to that year, the memory of which is hard to endure. In the painter's little room, under the hanging lamp with its bamboo cap as shade, there is a birthday cake on a low round table. Lu-niang and her daughter sit at the table.

Lu-niang holds a table knife in her hand but does not move, they are waiting silently and solemnly...

On the round cake there is a line in English: "Happy Birthday!"

Steam rises from coffee cups. Xingxing tries to start serving but mother pulls a grim face and Xingxing draws back her hands.

The desk clock is ticking, tictak, tictak...

Xingxing stretches her hand out to pick the little red flower on top of the cake, but mother throws her a glance and she again draws back, lowers her head. The time really gets long.

The door is pushed open and in it appears Chenguang.

Xingxing rushes over and hangs at her father's neck: "Happy birthday!"

But father knits his brows. Lu-niang is startled, walks over to him, pushes the daughter aside and sees on Chenguang's neck lashmarks. She fiercely pulls her husband around and tears off his shirt. Lashmarks, a crisscross of lashmarks, bloody red welts...

Xingxing covers her face and cries out.

Chenguang turns around and looks solemnly at his wife. He forks middle and index finger and pushes up both corners of his mouth.

Xingxing makes an effort to stop crying but with all efforts she does not manage to lift the corners of her mouth.

Chenguang takes the knife from the hand of his wife, sits down and cuts the cake into three parts, one part for each of them, but nobody wants to eat. Chenguang takes a piece and forces it into his mouth, at the same time lightly tapping his plate with the knife. Lu-niang takes her piece of the cake and so does the daughter.

The sound of suppressed rapid breathing. Lu-niang and Xingxing both with lowered heads choke with crying...Still sobbing and with cake in her mouth Xingxing says: "Papa, don't you die! If you die, I wouldn't know how to get to an orphanage..."

The painter, shocked and astonished, turns to his daughter...

Offscreen a proud voice starts singing:

Ah...With great zeal we sing of deep agony,  
As we progress, we write the character "ren" [man] on the sky,  
Ah...how glorious!  
That character is the most powerful symbol in the world!

The chorus changes into a light dance music. A faraway female voice sings a song without words. Under an extremely delicate, mild light, in the extremely narrow space, strictly speaking only a square meter of space, Chenguang and Lu-niang begin to dance gracefully...

Lu-niang, still tears in her eyes, smiles as she looks at Chenguang full of emotions. Chenguang smiles as he looks full of love at Lu-niang; they dance slowly...

Xingxing sleeps on a provisional bedstead put up against the wall...

The young Lu-niang in the portrait on the wall faintly smiles at herself and Chenguang...

Chenguang looks attentively at his wife; although she smiles, on her forehead there seems a boundless ocean of anxiety.

The reed moves up and down like waves; the wind sighs and signs...

A female voice in the far distance: "Ah...Ah..."

On a vast expanse of prairie there are bundles of straw that are moving. Actually, these are some artists who carry the straw on their backs. Some wear glasses, some lean on sticks. Under the biggest straw pile a tobacco pile sticks out; Chenguang smokes his pipe carrying the bundle of straw and walking step by step...

Offscreen the voice of Xingxing: "Papa, don't you die. If you die I would not know how to get to an orphanage."

It is raining in torrents. We see a man, small like a little dot, walking at the far horizon.

Chenguang moves to a new reed marsh. He coughs continuously. Rainwater runs down his cheeks. He has a serious, but bleak expression in his eyes...

The reeds have wilted and are yellow; the autumn wind rustles...

Chenguang, shivering in the autumn wind, is painting from nature in the reed bushes.

Chenguang presses some blue paint onto his palette. As he gazes intently on the blue paint, we hear the voice of Feng Hansheng: "...In all my life it has been one-sided love and one-sided yearning..."

Chenguang laughs a short bitter laugh.

The autumn wind rustles...

Chenguang finds a bird's egg in the reeds. He sees one water fowl coming back with a fish in its beak and patiently feeding the downy fledgelings...

..In the little room. Chenguang is engaged in painting on the wall, Lu-niang is distractedly folding her daughter's clothes.

The daughter, now grown up into a big girl, pushes the door open and comes into the room. She silently exchanges an understanding glance with her mother, then gently calls: "Papa!"

"En!" Chenguang pays no attention, he is just coloring a forest. Xingxing restrains her inner excitement and uneasiness and says as quietly as she can manage: "I have a boyfriend..."

"En!" Chenguang mixes his colors and gives it all his attention.

Xingxing continues: "We intend to marry..."

At this, Chenguang finally puts down his brush, as if only then fully understanding what his daughter was saying.

"Ah?"

Xingxing continues in much the same tone: "I want to go abroad with him...."

"What?" Chenguang suddenly turns around and looks at his daughter as if stunned.

Xingxing has already prepared passport and ticket and places these on the small table. She says in a low voice: "Right away...I am going to take the train..."

Chenguang now turns to his wife: "Do you know about this?"

"I know," answers Lu-niang very calmly to her husband's question.

This stuns Chenguang even more, he looks at his wife and asks further: "Do you agree?"

"I agree."

Chenguang half closes his eyes in pain...

Lu-niang says in a low but clear voice: "She may still come back...Didn't we also leave and then come back again!"

Chenguang tries to restrain his fury; he looks from his wife to his daughter who lowers her head slightly...He says in a serious tone: "I...don't agree!"

Xingxing raises her head, looks pained at her father and says: "Why?"

Chenguang shakes all over as if freezing:

"I cannot agree to my daughter's leaving our fatherland. To get back to my fatherland, I had to make clandestine efforts for half my life..." Chenguang seems to lack strength to go on.

"Papa," Xingxing musters all her courage, "If I go, I go with the one I love. I love him and he loves me. I know you, I know you too well. Papa, you love this our country, you love it so deeply that you can't leave it, but does this country love you?!"

As if hit by a thunderbolt, Chenguang staggers. He quickly supports himself against the wall. He is unable to reply to this question. There is a frightening silence in the room...Xingxing turns pale with fright as she looks at her father. Lu-niang hugs her daughter...

"Papa," Xingxing gently begs her father with tears in her eyes. "I wish you would see your daughter off...you showed me so much love in the past."

Chenguang does not turn around, he still leans against the wall and does not reply.

The desk clock keeps on ticking mercilessly...

Xingxing lifts up the suitcase that mother has prepared for her, also a picture album with many portraits of mother painted by her father. She bows deeply toward her father who still has his back turned to her. Her lips tremble slightly as she calls out in a low voice: "Papa!"

Chenguang still does not turn around. After a while he hears the door closing; when he turns around he is alone in the room. Very weak and feeble he leans on one of his paintings.

The platform of Beijing railway station. A train is about to leave. Lu-niang stands at the side of the train and looks at Xingxing who is very uneasy. Xingxing leans from the train window; her tearful eyes do not look at mother, but look intently at the people on the platform, searching, but she cannot find father. Father did not come, father would not come...

At Xingxing's side is a young overseas Chinese who does not say anything.

A long whistle from the locomotive...

The train moves out. Lu-niang stands still and lifts her arm.

At that moment Xingxing sees the red five-star flag on a flagpole of the railway platform; she weeps aloud and covers her mouth...

Lu-niang also saw the red flag.

The red flag, soaked with tears, flutters slowly back and forth like in a dream...

The five stars give off their brilliant radiance...

The long sound of the steam whistle...

All cars of the train slowly roll out...



Xingxing stretches both her hands out of the window, tears streaming from her eyes...

From offscreen comes the cry of a newly born baby...the roar of the ocean...

Lu-niang's voice: "Ah, Fatherland...the child?"

Chenguang's voice: "Give the child a name!"

"That is right," Lu-niang's voice, "give it a name..."

The red flag slowly waves back and forth...

"Then let us call the child Xingxing!"

Lu-niang turns her face toward the train that moves away; gradually the train disappears in the distance...

Xingxing is sobbing silently in the train compartment..

Again the red flag as it slowly waves back and forth...

Offscreen we hear Xingxing's voice: "Papa, don't you die. If you die, I would not know how to get to an orphanage..."

An evening in late autumn at the reed marsh.

Chenguang with dishevelled hair and a dirty face digs, coughing, at the roots of the reeds for grain stored by the field vole.

Chenguang eats mouths full of the raw wheat that he dug out...

Wild geese in "ren" formation fly over against the wind...

Chenguang alone in the small room smoking his pipe. While thus smoking, he hears a light tapping at the door.

"Come in!" He gets up.

In comes a Chinese woman dressed like foreigner. He immediately recognizes that this is the Juanjuan of former years. She is still so young, as if the years and months have passed her by without leaving a trace. She wears a thick white coat, white bell-bottomed pants, a small white hat is pressed on her beautiful hair that has not lost its gloss. A white handbag is slung over her shoulder. She gives him a namecard and asks:

"Don't you know me?"

"How could that be possible...not knowing you?" Chenguang shakes hands with her and motions her to sit down.

Juanjuan sits down, pulls out an extra long cigarette, lights it with a cigarette lighter and only then asks: "May I?"

"Please!"

Juanjuan looks intently at Chenguang, lightly smokes a few puffs and cannot hide a trembling in her voice as she asks: "How are things?...Living well?"

"Quite well."

Juanjuan lets her eyes wander around the four walls of the small room and asks again: "Truly...all well?"

"Of course it is true!"

"You are not sorry for what you said 30 years ago on the dock at Shanghai?"

"No!"

"You are not sorry for your decision 20 years ago to give up everything abroad and return to the fatherland?"

"No!"

Juanjuan cannot hold back her tears, half to herself she says: "I am very unfortunate, so unfortunate...you are still so single-minded, still so noble... that is why I can never forget you..."

She stretches out her hand to put the cigarette butt into the ashtray, when she discovers a woodcarving knife on the table. The knife appears well used but still has attached to its handle the original "lover's knot" tassel.

She turns toward the wall and sees Lu-niang's portrait. She frowns and with a hard squeeze extinguishes the cigarette butt. "...Good-bye..." and she opens her handbag to take out a tape recorder, but suddenly, with a rattling sound, all the things fall out from her handbag...

Before Chenguang had fully realized what had happened, she pushes open the door and is gone.

Now only does Chenguang notice that what she had dumped out from her handbag were more than 10 woodcarving knives and each of them had a "lover's knot" tassel attached to its handle...Excitedly he jumps up...

He rushes out of the door, there is a big snowstorm outside.

A sedan is just being driven away; its wheels whirl up a drift of snow. Its dim red taillights glitter and disappear...

Stupefied, Chenguang stands in the snowstorm. Wind and snow turbulently blow his grizzled hair...

Chenguang slowly goes back into the small house and picks up the carving knives one by one. He discovers the tape recorder which the guest had left behind. He sits down and looks at it, and then unconsciously pushes the "play" button. The tape recorder plays a song, a song remembered from the remote past:

We met under the light of the sun,  
We became friends under the light of the moon;  
We are in love with each other,  
We love each other under the light of the stars.

How stingy the sun is.  
For several decades it has not bestowed a ray of light for our union.  
How cold the moon is.  
It casts only shadows on our path.  
How heartless the stars are; there are none that are like those eyes  
of yours, so filled with enthusiasm.

We met under the light of the sun,  
We became friends under the light of the moon;  
We are in love with each other,  
We love each other under the light of the stars.

During the song, clouds of smoke from his pipe drift over Chenguang's face...  
During the song, we see from Chenguang's earlier years a passenger liner  
slowly moving away on the Huangpu River and young Juanjuan singing her song...

In the snowstorm, a supersonic airliner takes off. The air is filled with the  
noise of its engines.

Chenguang sits alone, smoking his pipe, with a bitter smile on his face.

The supersonic airliner rushes through the snowstorm...  
At the porthole of the plane, the eyes of a woman fill with tears; at the  
corners of her eyes wrinkles show in fine lines.  
Snowflakes flying around...

At the reed marsh. Snowflakes fly around and are blowing against Chenguang's  
face. He suddenly coughs painfully...  
Chenguang collapses from sickness. The leaves of the reeds cover him and the  
leaves in turn are covered by a thick cover of snow...

Chenguang lifts sorrowful eyes, looking at the thick snow falling over the  
earth...

The camera lens is continuously lifted higher; in this boundless white world,  
there lies, all alone, a "savage"...

Thick snow is whirling about...  
The snow changes into fireworks; the firework paints marvelous designs in the  
sky. Chenguang and Lu-niang are amidst a wildly joyous crowd...

Flocks of little birds fly all over the sky and chirp noisily...  
Chenguang and Lu-niang together with Xingxing run around amidst the flocks of  
birds, rushing here and there, calling out drunken with happiness...  
Flocks of birds flying around and fluttering around...  
Chenguang laughs in a carefree mood and runs around...

A big wild goose spreads its wings and flies off...

An offscreen voice speaks out his sorrowful inner thoughts: "If this were  
merely a painting, all this only paint and lines, shadows and contours pro-  
duced by the fantasy of a painter, we could tear it up, blot it out and throw  
it away, but unfortunately this is our fatherland! Our blood flows in its

rivers and streams. Our youthful dreams are in its trees and forests. On its breast are thousands of big and small roads. We have suffered a lot on these roads and worn out many pairs of shoes, but we have gained a sacred right, that is...our fatherland! I love you!"

Superimposed: the camera lens rises high up into the sky and looks down through a thin, translucent snow belt on the boundless land, the vast territory of our fatherland, beloved like the bosom of a mother...

Turbulent sea of clouds...  
Rising and falling mountain ranges...  
Turbulent waves of the Yellow River...

Gurgling spring waters...  
Small birds flying and chirping in dense woods filled with sunlight.  
Long stretches of roads...

The "stone forest" of Guishan district [Yunnan Province]. The children of A-shi-ma dancing joyfully around a campfire.

The eyes of the painter.  
He is diligently painting, painting...  
He is in a harbor with thousands of masts of boats ready to sail...  
He is on a boat journey through the Three Gorges...  
A picture of the ten thousand miles of the Yangtze River meanders through his painting...  
He paints a painting depicting the customs of the Tai people...  
He attends the livery Water-Sprinkling Festival at Xishuangbana [in the Tai people district of Yunnan]...  
Water continuously being sprinkled on him, he joyfully laughs, joyfully laughs...

Snowflakes swirling around...  
A lonely man lies in the vast white world...  
Chengguang is already very weak and debilitated. His lips are dry and chapped.  
He slightly opens his mouth and swallows some snowflakes...  
With grief and indignation he looks up at the sky. He struggles to raise his head and stretches his trembling hands toward heaven...  
Suddenly there is a tempestuous sobbing, a loud recitation, a loud protest, the music of the Internationale...

...Dark clouds rolling along the sky, a pair of haggard hands stretch out toward heaven...

The camera lens opens up, it is a scene from Qu Yuan's "Tian wen" [Questions Addressed to Heaven]. In the picture the sky is covered by dark clouds rolling along. Qu Yuan with his hair dishevelled and face upturned, lifts his arms high and questions Heaven...

Chengguang and Lu-niang paste up the "Qu Yuan Questions Heaven" posters at the Tiananmen square. By means of this picture they express their sorrow, bewail our fatherland's adverse circumstances and give vent to their heartfelt righteous resentment...



In their background we see the gleaming mountains and the glistening sea.. In front of them, crowds of people stand, more and more crowding in, to gaze silently and sorrowfully at the "Qu Yuan Questions Heaven."

Some plainclothes policemen squeeze through the crowd toward Chenguang...

Some people have noticed it and shout to Chenguang: "Quick, run, quick, run!"

Chenguang proudly remains where he is standing, not moving one step.

The plainclothes policemen squeeze through to Chenguang...

The people anxiously look at Chenguang.

Suddenly, a strong hand seizes Chenguang and pulls him to run away...

A wave of people presses against the plainclothes men and blocks their way...

Chenguang while running is dragged into a secluded alleyway...by the...by the man ahead of him...

The man who pulled Chenguang stops running...

Out of breath, Chenguang and Lu-niang are struck speechless, the man facing them is the one-armed general.

Chenguang says: "...It's you!?"

The general says: "You can't stay long in Beijing!"

Chenguang looks perplexed at the general. Remaining perplexed despite much thought he says: "Living in our fatherland in the wake of our liberation we still have to become fugitives? Living in our socialist fatherland, we still have to become fugitives!?"

The general takes off his coat and drapes it over Chenguang's shoulders; and says solemnly: "You have been photographed by them, you must leave Beijing immediately!"

Chenguang turns to his wife and says: "No...No!!"

With tears in her eyes, Lu-niang says with deep feeling: "You better go, I will be able to find you. Didn't I even find you when you had run away to a foreign country?!"

Chenguang looks dazed.

It is night. The reed marsh where the fugitive is hiding.

Chenguang tosses and turns unable to sleep. He gazes at the stars in the distance.

Suddenly, he hears some sound far away, he is startled and alarmed. He inclines the head and listens attentively. There is the sound of splashing water, of men, of a startled water fowl flying away...He sits up, the sounds come closer and closer. He sees flares, more flares. He gets up and discovers that there are flares all over the lake. From among the sounds of people comes the sound of a motorboat and the light of a searchlight. He realizes the danger of the situation, grabs his bundle and flees toward the thicker growth of reeds...

The flares come closer and closer. The beam of the searchlight from the motorboat sweeps over the reed bushes...

There is a hubbub of voices and many small boats are rowed into the middle of the lake.

Chenguang runs away, striking against the reed stalks...

"Here he is!"

"Here he is!"

The beam of the searchlight sweeps past Chenguang's head, Chenguang ducks into the reed bushes...

A man in long wading boots comes to near where Chenguang is hiding. Chenguang rushes him and they struggle, rolling around in the muddy water. Chenguang firmly grabs his opponent's throat and makes him drink some of the dirty water, then lets go of him and runs away...

"Here he is!"

"Here he is!"

Chenguang quickly runs through the reed bushes...

The people in the small boats use bamboo sticks to hit the lake water...  
The clamor of voices gets further and further away and finally stops...

Snowflakes quietly flutter and fall. Chenguang is alone, he crawls along in open country, which is gradually becoming white. He crawls with difficulty...  
The reed marsh is far behind him in the distance...

In the reed marsh. A crowd of people search in the dried and withered reed bushes. In the crowd is Xingxing, her long hair dishevelled, dressed completely like the girls returning from abroad. She vigorously pushes aside the reed bushes that block the way and sadly calls out: "Papa--Papa--This is your daughter--come back! Papa--Papa! Your daughter..."  
The north wind carries her shouting away...

The snowflakes quietly flutter and fall. Chenguang crawls alone over the endless white snowy plain... He crawls with more and more difficulty.

In the reed marsh. Lu-niang is among the searchers. She does not call or shout, merely continuously wipes the tears from her eyes. She staggers along...

The snowflakes quietly flutter and fall. Chenguang creeps along with all his might using both elbows.

In the reed marsh. Qiushan is among the searchers. He staggers along supporting himself with a stick, hoarsely calling out in poetic form: "My boy! This is not the will-o'-the-wisp of hell! It is the brightness of humanity that approaches you!"

"My boy, it's not devils!"

These are human beings! It is us!"

The snow has stopped. Chenguang slowly moves his body forward in the quietness of a snow-covered plain. He gasps for breath and stops for a while. He licks the snow on the ground with his tongue...

In the reed marsh. Among the searchers there is Feng Hansheng. Carrying his book which is already in the form of proof sheets, he shouts plaintively: "Chenguang, my young friend! My manuscript is finally being published!... Come out, young friend, you see we have lived to see an era where we can face up to history!"

Chenguang slowly creeps along on the snow-covered plain...

In the reed marsh. Among the searchers there is the one-armed general. He now has insignia on his collar and on his military cap. He raises the one arm that he is left with and shouts:

"Come out! The fatherland needs you...the fatherland loves you! Loves you!"  
The general starts to sob.

Feng Hansheng beats his breast and stamps his feet as he cries bitterly...

Xingxing sobs on Lu-niang's breast. Lu-niang does not cry, but merely gazes with her tear-filled eyes at the snow coming down from the skies...

In the east, the sky is getting slightly red already...

A slowly flying helicopter...

A bird's eye view from above: the reed marsh, hills...

On the snowy plain, a black question mark...

The helicopter slowly lands...

The question mark gets bigger and bigger, a question mark of unparalleled size, that actually is the last stage of Chenguang's life. With whatever strength remained in him, he had painted a question mark on the clean white earth. The dot in the question mark was his own frozen body.

Chenguang is curled up on the snow-covered plain. He stretched his hands toward heaven as far as he could. Toward the end he did not have the strength to stretch his hands very far, but we can see that he had made the effort... His eyes are not closed, staring, fixedly staring...

The camera lens again looks from high up in the sky down on the vast land of the fatherland, the flowing rivers and streams, the crisscross of roads...

From offscreen we hear Chenguang's emotion filled monologue: "If this were only a painting, all this only paints and lines, shadows and contours produced by the fantasy of a painter, we could tear it up, blot it out and throw it away, but unfortunately this is our fatherland! Our blood flows in its rivers and streams. Our youthful dreams are in its trees and forests. On its breast are thousands of big and small roads. We have suffered a lot on these roads and worn out many pairs of shoes, but we gained a sacred right, that is...our fatherland! I love you!"

A flock of wild geese slowly fly over in the "ren" formation. The "ren" [man] character blots out the sky and covers the earth...gradually, they move further and further away and disappear on the horizon...

A proud voice gently intunes:

Ah...Joyful song, solemn is the course of events,  
In our flight we write the character "ren" on the sky;  
Oh, how beautiful,  
It is the loftiest symbol between heaven and earth.

One reed stalk sways in the breeze, it remains standing...stands firm and strong.

At Guangzhou, April 1979  
At Beijing, May 1979.

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